

ST. NICHOLAS.

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AT FIESOLE.

BY SUSAN COOLIDGE.

FIESOLE is a quaint old town which perches on a hill-top above the valley of the Arno and the city of Florence. You must not pronounce it as it is spelt, but like this—Fu-es-o-lee. From the Florence streets people catch glimpses of its bell-towers and roofs shining above the olive orchards and vineyards of the hill-side. A white road winds upward toward it in long, easy zigzags, and seems to say, "Come with me and I will show you something pretty."

Not long ago there were two girls in Florence to whom, plainly as road could speak, the white road seemed to utter these very words. Pauline and Molly Hale were the names of these girls. It was six months since they had left America with their father and mother, and it seemed much longer, because so much had happened in the time. First, the sea voyage, not pleasant, and yet not exactly unpleasant, because papa got better all the way, and that made mamma happy. Now papa would be quite well at once, they thought. His people (for papa was a clergyman) had sent him away for that purpose. They were not a rich people, but each gave a little, and altogether it made enough to carry the pastor and his family across the sea and keep them there one year, with very prudent management. The Hales, therefore, did not travel about as most people do, but went straight to Italy, where they hoped to find that sun and warm air which are an invalid's best medicines.

"Going straight to Italy" means, however, a great many pleasant things by the way. Molly was always reminding Maria Matilda, her doll, of the sights she had seen and the superior advantages she enjoyed over the dolls at home.

After this mention of a doll, what will you say when I tell you that Molly was almost thirteen? Most girls of thirteen scorn to play with dolls, but Molly was not of their number. She was childish for her years, and possessed a faithful little heart, which clung to Maria Matilda as to an old friend whom it would be unkind to lay aside.

"First, there was Paris," Molly would say to her. "No, first there was *Deeph*, where the people all talked so queerly that we could n't understand a word. That was funny, Matilda, was n't it? Then don't you recollect that beautiful church which we saw when we went past *Ruin*?" (Molly meant Rouen, but I am sorry to say her pronunciation of French names was apt to be bad.) "And Paris too, where I took you to walk in the gardens, and papa let us both ride in a whirligig. None of the home dollies have ever ridden in whirligigs, have they? They wont understand what you mean unless I draw them a picture on my slate. Then we got into the cars and went and went till we came to that great dark tunnel. Were n't we frightened? and you cried, Matilda—I heard you. You need n't look so ashamed, though, for it *was* horrid. But we got out of it at last, though I thought we never should; and here we are at the padrona's, and it's ever so nice, only I wish papa would come back."

For Florence had proved too cold, and papa had joined a party and gone off to Egypt, leaving mamma and the children to live quietly and cheaply at Signora Goldi's boarding-house. It was a dingy house in the old part of Florence, but for all that it was a very interesting place to live in. The street in which the house stood was extremely narrow. High buildings on either side shut out the sun, the

cobble-stone pavement was always dirty, but all day long a stream of people poured through it wearing all sorts of curious clothes, talking all sorts of languages, and selling all sorts of things. Men with orange-baskets on their heads strolled along crying, "Oranges, sweet oranges!" Others, with panniers of flowers, chanted, "Fiori, belli fiori!" Peddlars displayed their wares, or waved gay stuffs; boys held up candied fruits, wood-carvings, and toys; women went to and fro bearing trays full of a chocolate-colored mixture dotted with the white kernels of pine-cones. This looked very rich and nice, and the poor people bought great slices of it. Pauline once invested a penny therein, but a single taste proved enough; it was sour and oily at once, and she gave the rest to a small Italian girl, who looked delighted and gobbled it up in huge mouthfuls. Whenever they went out to walk, there were fresh pleasures. The narrow street led directly to a shining sunlit river, which streamed through the heart of the city like a silver ribbon. Beautiful bridges spanned this river, some reared on graceful arches, some with statues at either end, one set all along its course by quaint stalls filled with gold and silver filagree, chains of amber, and turquoises blue as the sky. All over the city were delightful pictures, churches, and gardens, open and free to all who chose to come. Every day mamma and the children went somewhere and saw something, and, in spite of papa's absence, the winter was a happy one.

Going to and fro in the city, the children had often looked up the Fiesole hill, which is visible from many parts of Florence, and Pauline had conceived a strong wish to go there. Molly did not care so much, but as she always wanted to do what Pauline did, she joined her older sister in begging to go. Mamma, however, thought it too far for a walk, and carriage hire cost something; so she said no, and the girls were forced to content themselves with "making believe" what they would do if ever they went there, a sort of play in which they both delighted. None of the things they imagined proved true when they did go there, as you shall hear.

It was just as they were expecting papa back, that, coming in one day from a walk with Signora Goldi, Pauline and Molly found mamma hard at work packing a traveling-bag. She looked very pale and had been crying. No wonder, for the mail had brought a letter to say that papa, traveling alone from Egypt, had landed at Brindisi very ill with Syrian fever. The kind strangers who wrote the letter would stay with and take care of him till mamma could get there, but she must come at once.

"What *shall* I do?" cried poor Mrs. Hale, ap-

pealing in her distress to Signora Goldi. "I cannot take the children into a fever-room, and even if that were safe, the journey costs so much that it would be out of the question. Mr. Hale left me only money enough to last till his return. After settling with you and buying my ticket, I shall have very little remaining. Help me, padrona! Advise me what to do."

Signora Goldi's advertisement said, "English spoken," but the English was of a kind which English people found it hard to understand. Her kind heart, however, stood her instead of language, and helped her to guess the meaning of Mrs. Hale's words.

"Such peety!" she said. "Had I know, I not have let rooms for week after. The signora said 'let,' and she sure to go, so I let, else the *piccoli* should stay wiss me. Now what?" and she rubbed her nose hard, and wrinkled her forehead in a puzzled way. "I have!" she cried at last, her face beaming. "How the *piccolini* like go to Fiesole for a little? My brother who dead, he leave Engleis wife. She lady-maid once, speak Engleis well as me!—better! She have *pensione*—very small, but good—ah, so good, and it cost little, with air *si buono, si fresco!*"

The signora was drifting into Italian without knowing it, but was stopped by the joyous exclamations of the two girls.

"Fiesole! Oh, mamma! just what we wanted so much!" cried Pauline. "Do let us go there!"

"Do, do!" chimed in Molly. "I saw the padrona's sister once, and she's so nice. Say yes, please mamma."

The "yes" was not quite a happy one, but what could poor Mrs. Hale do? No better plan offered, time pressed, she hoped not to be obliged to stay long away from the children, and, as the signora said, the Fiesole hill-top must be airy and wholesome. So the arrangement was made, the terms settled, a carriage was called, and in what seemed to the girls a single moment, mamma had rattled away, with the signora to buy her ticket and see her off at the station. They looked at each other disconsolately, and their faces grew very long.

"We're just like orphans in a book," sobbed Pauline at last, while Molly watered Matilda's best frock with salt tears. The signora had a specially nice supper that night, and petted them a great deal, but they were very homesick for mamma and cried themselves to sleep.

Matters seemed brighter when they woke up next morning to find a lovely day, such a day as only Italy knows, with sunshine like gold, sky of clearest blue, and the river valley shining through soft mists like finest filtered rainbows. By a happy chance, the Fiesole sister-in-law came to Florence that

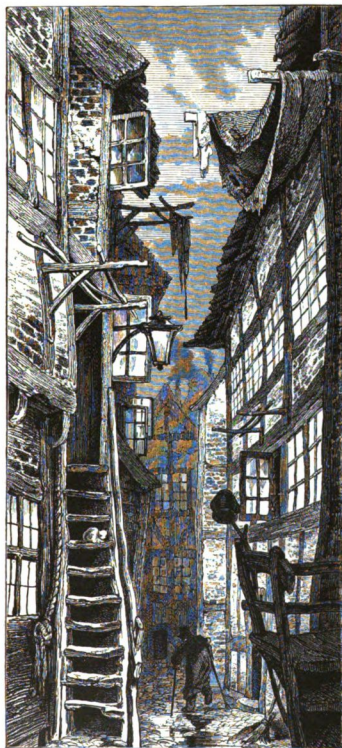
morning, and drove up to the door in a droll little cart drawn by a mouse-colored mule, with a green carrot-top stuck over his left ear and a bell round

in the afternoon they set out, perched on the narrow bench in front, one on each side of their new friend, and holding each other's hands tightly behind her ample back. Signora Bianchi was the sister-in-law's name, but "padrona" was easier to say, and they called her so from the beginning.

The hill-road was nowhere steep, but each winding turn took them higher and higher above Florence. They could see the curvings of the river, the bridges, the cathedral dome, and the tall, beautiful bell-tower, which they had been told was the work of the great artist Giotto. Further on, the road was shut in between stone walls. Over the tops of these hung rose-vines, full of fresh pink roses, though it was early March. Pauline and Molly screamed with pleasure, and the padrona, driving her mule close under the wall, dragged down a branch and let them gather the flowers for themselves, which was delightful. She would not stop however when, a little later, they came to fields gay with red and purple anemones, yellow tulips, and oddly-colored wild lilies so dark as to be almost black; there were plenty of such on top of the hill, she said, and they must not be too late in getting home. The black lilies were *giglias*—the emblem or badge of the city of Florence; the children had not seen them before, but they remembered the form of the flower in the carved shields over the door of some of the old buildings.

The road ended in a small paved *piazza*, which is the Italian name for an open square. All about it stood old buildings, houses and churches, and a very ancient cathedral with a dirty leather curtain hanging before its door. Passing these, the mule clattered down a narrow side-street, or rather lane. The streets in Florence had seemed dark and dirty, but what were they compared with this alley, in which the wheels of the little cart grazed the walls on either side as it passed along? Ricketty flights of outside stairs led to the upper stories of the buildings; overhead, lines of linen, hung out to dry, were flapping in the wind. An ill-smelling stream of water trickled over the rough cobble-stone pavement. Jolt, jolt, jolt!—then the mule turned suddenly into a dark place which looked like a shabby stable-yard. It was the ground-floor of the padrona's house, and this was the place where Pauline and Molly were to stay! They looked at each other with dismayed faces.

But the padrona called them to follow, and led



THE SIDE-STREET IN FIESOLE.

his neck. She gladly agreed to lodge the children, and her pleasant old face and English voice made them at once at home with her. There was just room in the cart for their trunk, and about five

the way up one stone stair-case after another till they came to the third story. Here things were pleasanter. It was plain and bare; the floors were of brick, there were no carpets, and the furniture was scanty and old. But the rooms were large and airy, and through the open casement bright rays of sunshine streamed in. Pauline ran to the window, and behold, instead of the dirty lane, she saw the open piazza, and beyond, a glimpse of the blue hills and the Florence valley! She called Molly, and, perched on the broad sill, they watched the sunset and chattered like happy birds, while the padrona bustled to and fro, preparing supper and spreading coarse clean linen on the beds of a little chamber which opened from the sitting-room. The padrona's kitchen was about the size of an American closet. The stove was a stone shelf with two holes in it, just big enough to contain a couple of quarts of charcoal. It was like a doll's kitchen, Molly thought; and Pauline stared when she saw the padrona produce a palm-leaf fan and begin to fan the fire, as if it were faint and needed to be revived. But as she gazed, the charcoal was coaxed into a glow, the little pots and pans bubbled, and hey, presto! supper was ready, with half the trouble and a quarter the fuel which would have been needed to set one of our big home ranges going. It was a queer supper, but very good, the children thought; their long drive had made them hungry, and the omelette, salad, and *polenta*, or fried mush, tasted delicious. Everything was nice but the bread, which was dark in color and had an unpleasant sour taste. The padrona smiled when she saw them put aside their untasted slices, and said that she too used to dislike Italian bread, but that now she preferred it to any other.

The padrona was delighted with her young visitors. She had long been a widow. One of her sons was in the army, and seldom at home; the other helped her about the house and tilled a little meadow which belonged to them. She had no daughter to keep her company, and the sweet, bright-faced American girls pleased her greatly. She helped the sisters to undress, and tucked them into their beds as kindly as any old nurse, and they fell asleep with her pleasant voice in their ears. "Good-night and good dreams, little miss."

The morrow brought another fine day, and the girls improved it for a ramble about the quaint town. It seemed to them the very *oldest* place they had ever seen—and, in fact, Fiesole is older far than Florence, of which it was first the cradle and afterward the foe. They stood a long time before the windows of the straw-shop, choosing the things they would like to buy *if* they had any money! Pauline fell in love with a straw parasol, and Molly hankered after a work-basket for mamma.

Both of them felt that it was dreadful to be poor, but there was no help for it. Then they climbed to an upper terrace and sat a long time looking on the fine view it commanded, and talking in gestures to some brown little children who came up to beg from them. After that, they lifted the curtain over the cathedral door, and stole quietly about the ancient church. It was dark and shabby and worm-eaten; but as they wandered to and fro, they came upon beautiful things—tombs of sculptured marble with figures of saints and madonnas, wreaths of marble flowers, bits of old carved wood as black as ebony. It was strange to find such treasures hidden away in the dust and gloom, and to think that there they were, dusty and gloomy and old, before Columbus discovered the very new continent which we call America! A queer smell breathed about the place, a smell of must and age and dried-up incense. Pauline and Molly were glad to get away from it and feel the fresh air and the sunshine again. They rambled on to the western slope of the hill, and a little way down, where the land descends in terraces to the wooded valley below, they came upon the ruins of a Roman amphitheater. They had never seen an amphitheater before, but they guessed what it was from a picture which mamma had shown them. On the ledges which once were seats, where spectators seated in rows had watched the lions and the gladiators fight, crowds of purple violets now lifted their sweet faces to the sky.

After that the amphitheater became their favorite walk, and they went back every day. The padrona warned them against sitting long on the ground or staying out till the sunset dew fell, but they heeded what she said very little; it seemed impossible that so pleasant a spot could have any harm about it. But at last came a morning when Pauline recollected the padrona's warnings, with a great frightened heart-jump, for Molly waked up hot and thirsty, and, when she lifted her head from the pillow, let it fall back again and complained of being dizzy. The padrona made her some tea, and after awhile she felt better and got up. But all that day and the next she looked pale and dragged one foot after the other as she went about, and the third day fever came upon her in good earnest. Tea did no good this time, and she lay still and heavy, with burning hands and flushed cheeks. The padrona tried various simple medicines, and Pauline sat all day bathing Molly's head and fanning her, but neither medicine nor fanning was of use; and as night came on, and the fever grew higher, Molly began to toss and call for mamma, and to cry out about her pillow, which was stuffed with wool and very hard.

"I don't like this pillow, Pauline—indeed I

don't. It makes my neck ache so! Why don't you take it away, Pauline, and give me a nice soft pillow, such as we used to have at home? And I want some ice, and some good American water to drink. This water is bad. I can't drink it. Make the ice clink in the tumbler, please—because if I hear it clink I sha'n't be thirsty any more. And call mamma. I must see mamma. Mamma!”

And Molly tried to get up, and then tumbled back and fell into a doze for awhile, while poor Pauline sat beside her with a lump in her throat which seemed to grow worse every moment, and to bid fair to choke her entirely if it did not stop. She did not dare to sob aloud, for fear of rousing Molly,

clung to this friend in need as to the only helper left in the wide world. Beppo, the padrona's son, walked into Florence and brought out a little Italian doctor, who ordered beef-tea, horrified Pauline by a hint of bleeding, and left, promising to come again, which promise he did not keep. Pauline was glad that he did not; she felt no confidence in the little doctor, and she knew, besides, that doctors cost money, and the small sum which mamma left was almost gone. Day after day passed, Molly growing no better, the padrona more anxious, Pauline more unhappy. It seemed as if years and years had gone by since mamma left them—almost as if it were a dream that they ever had a mamma,



“SHE BENT OVER MOLLY AND LISTENED.”

but the tears ran quietly down her cheeks as she thought of home and mamma. Where was she? How was papa? Why did n't they write? And, oh dear! what should she, should she do, if Molly were to be very ill in that lonely place, where there was no doctor or any of the nice things which people in sickness need so much? No one can imagine how forlorn Pauline felt—that is, no one who has not tried the experiment of taking care of a sick friend in a foreign land, where the ways and customs are strange and uncomfortable, and the necessities of good nursing cannot be had.

Nobody in the world could be kinder than was the padrona to her young invalid guest. Night after night she sat up, all day long she watched and nursed and cooked and comforted. Pauline

or a home, or any of the happy things which now looked so sadly far away.

Then came the darkest day of all, when Molly lay so white and motionless that Pauline thought her dead; when the padrona sat for hours, putting a spoonful of something between the pale lips every little while, but never speaking, and the moments dragged along as though shod with lead. Morning grew to noon, noon faded into the dimness of twilight, still the white face on the pillow did not stir, and still the padrona sat silently and dropped in her spoonfuls. At last she stopped, laid down the spoon, bent over Molly, and listened. Was any breath at all coming from the quiet lips?

“Oh, padrona, is she dead?” sobbed Pauline, burying her face in the bed-clothes.

"No, she is asleep," said the padrona. Then she hid her own face and said a prayer of thankfulness, while Pauline wept for joy, hushing herself as much as possible that Molly might not be disturbed.

All that night and far into the morning, the blessed sleep continued, and when Molly awoke the fever was gone. She was very white, and as weak as a baby; but Pauline and the padrona were happy again, for they knew that she was going to get well.

So another week crept by, each day bringing a little more strength and appetite to Molly, and a little more color to her pale face, and then the padrona thought she might venture to sit up. They propped her into a big chair with many pillows ("brickbats" Molly called them), and had just pulled her across the room to the window, when a carriage rattled on the stones below, somebody ran upstairs, and into the room burst mamma! Yes, the little mamma herself, pale as Molly almost, from the fright she had gone through; but so overjoyed to see them, and so relieved at finding Molly up and getting well, that there was nothing for it but a hearty cry, in which all took part and which did them all a great deal of good.

Then came explanations. Papa was a great deal better. The doctor thought the fever would do him good in the end rather than harm. But he was still weak, and mamma had left him to rest at the hotel in Florence while she flew up the hill to her children. Why did n't she write? She *had* written, again and again, but the letters had gone astray somehow, and none of the girls' notes had reached her except one from Molly, written just after they went to Fiesole. I may as well say now that all these missing letters followed them to America three months later, with a great deal of postage to be paid on them; but they were not of much use *then*, as you can imagine!

There was so much to say and to hear that it seemed as though they could never get through. Pauline held mamma's hand tight, and cried and laughed by turns.

"It was dreadful!" she said. "It was just exactly as if you and papa and everybody we knew were dead and we were left all alone. And I thought Molly would die too, and then what would have become of me? The padrona has been so kind—you can't think how kind. She sat up nine nights with Molly, and always said she was n't tired; but I knew she was. I used to think it must be the nicest place in the world up here at Fiesole, but I never want to see it again in all my life."

"Don't say that, for Molly has got well here. And the good padrona too! You ought to love Fiesole for her sake."

"So I ought. And I do love her. But you'll not ever go away and leave us *anywhere* again, will you, mamma?"

"Not if I can help it," replied mamma, speaking over Molly's head, which was nestled comfortably on her shoulder. There were tears in her eyes as she spoke. It had not been possible to help it, but the tender mother's heart felt it a wrong to her children that they should have been without her in sickness.

It was another week before Molly could be moved. Mamma drove up twice during that time, bringing oranges and wine and all sorts of nice things, and the last time a parcel with a present in it for the children to give to the padrona. It was a pretty silk shawl and a small gold pin to fasten it. Pauline and Molly were enchanted to make this gift, and the padrona admired the shawl extremely, but Mrs. Hale sorrowfully longed to be richer that she might heap many tokens of gratitude in the kind hands which had worked so lovingly for her little girls in their trouble.

"I can't bear to say good-bye," were Molly's last words as she leaned from the carriage for a parting hug. "Dear padrona, how I wish you would just come with us to America and live there. We would call you 'aunt,' and love you so, and be so glad, you can't think! Do come!"

But the padrona, smiling and tearful, shook her head and declared that she could never leave her boys and the hill-top and old neighbors, but must stay in Fiesole as long as she lived. So with many kisses and blessings the good-byes were uttered, and out of the narrow street and across the piazza rattled the carriage, and so down the hill-road to Florence.

Pauline and Molly are safe in America now. They tell the girls at school a great deal about what they saw and where they went, but they don't talk much of the time of Molly's illness, and when Matilda Maria, who lives in a drawer now, entertains the other dolls with tales of travel, she skips that. It is still too fresh in their memories, and too sad, for them to like to speak of it. But sometimes after they go to bed at night, they put their heads on the same pillow and whisper to each other about the old church, the amphitheater, the padrona, those days of fever, and all the other things that happened to them when mamma went away and left them alone at Fiesole.

tumbler with liquid in it, and a light. If the liquid is water, and a few drops of wine are added to it, the eye immediately perceives that the liquid has become faintly colored; and you can easily see that this does not depend on the distance of the tumbler and the light. So long, at least, as the light reaches the eye, it can convey its message, telling the eye that some colored fluid has been added to the water. Now there is an instrument called the spectroscope, by means of which the eye could not only learn this, but also precisely what fluid had been added. Consider, then, the second picture of Fig. 4. Here we have the eye as before, Venus with her air all round her instead of the tumbler of water, and the sun instead of the lamp. Can you not now understand that if there is moisture in the heavy air of Venus, the eye, properly armed with a spectroscope and a telescope, can learn the fact from the sun's rays which have passed through that air? That is what astronomers actually did last December, when the globe of Venus was passing,

as in Fig. 3, between our earth and the sun. There cannot be moisture in the air of a planet unless there are seas and oceans on the planet's surface. No doubt, then, Venus has her continents and oceans, her islands and promontories, and inland seas and lakes, very much as our earth has. Then there must be rivers on the land and currents in the ocean; there must be clouds and rain, wind and storm, thunder and lightning, and perhaps snow and hail.

Whether the planet is an inhabited world or not, it would be difficult to say. Perhaps it is a world getting ready for use as a home for living creatures. Some astronomers think that the sun is gradually parting with his heat. If, millions of years hence, the sun should only give out half as much heat as now, perhaps Venus would be as comfortable a place to live in as our earth is now. That may seem to us a long time for a planet to wait, but it is not long to Him in whose eyes "one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years are as one day."

DICK HARDIN IN PHILADELPHIA.

BY LUCY S. RIDER.

Philadelphia, March 28, 1876.

DEAR MOTHER: We got here. I like to live here. We went into a sleeping-car, and a black man let down a little cupboard, and made a bed in it. I slept in a top cupboard, and Uncle Ben down below. It had sheets just like a bed, only you bumped your head pretty often.

I climbed up. It was worse than a tree. There was a lady, and she had to sleep up high too. She did n't climb. The man brought some stairs, and she went to the top and worked herself in.

There was a little baby, and it cried worse than Tooty, and some man snored, and my bed joggled, and I thought I'd sleep with Uncle Ben. His bed did n't joggle. He is never afraid.

There is a horse-car in New York, and we rode in it. It has bells. A man can stop it any time. I can stop it. The other teams get on the track too, but the driver has a whistle, and the other man gets off.

A man comes in, and everybody gives him some money. He has a silver thing that rings to make him honest. Uncle Ben says he would like to put one on some folks. May be he will give me one. The women come in, and stop and look at some

man, and he stands up and she sits down, except the ones with an old bonnet on.

There is a road called Broadway. There is no grass. There is a stone floor and folks, and teams, like going home from meeting.

Uncle Ben showed me the house where they make my ST. NICHOLAS. It is a big house. Mr. Scribner lives in it. I saw his name 'way up on top in gold letters. It says "Scribner and Co." That means him and company. He has got lots of books.

Every little while there is a big man in the road, with a blue coat on, and a round stick as long as my leg, and he is a policeman, and he walks up and down, and everybody has to do just as he says. He walks across the road with the ladies, and they are not afraid. He has a silver star on his coat, and a belt with a silver buckle, and silver buttons. I am going to be a policeman after I get through college.

Your son,

DICKERSON HARDIN.

Philadelphia, April 8, 1876.

DEAR MOTHER: I am well. Aunt Martha is well, and Willie is well too. Willie wears shirts

and collars just like Uncle Ben, and neck-ties. He gave me a neck-tie. They have stiff bosoms in them. They do not have to be made. Aunt Martha buys them at the store. I wish I had a shiny shirt to wear with my neck-tie.

They have all brick houses here, with white boards for blinds. It makes it night inside when you shut them up. They do not pump up the water. It comes out in pipes, like my squirt-gun, only bigger, and more fun. It makes it fly half-a-mile, I guess.

There is a woman with a big dish on her head.



"HE IS A POLICEMAN (I DREW THIS LAST TIME)."

She walks fast, and does not hold it on, but it stays on. She sings a kind of song that says,

"Shadow! shadow!
Nice, fresh shadow!"

and that means that she has some shad to sell, and Hannah buys some.

There are men too, but they have a cart and a horse instead of their head, and they sing a kind of tune too, but you can't tell what they say pretty often.

Aunt M. (for Martha) thinks she will write you the letter next week. She s'poses that will be keeping my promise, and because this is a long one too. Willie don't like to write letters. I tell him I guess he would write letters if his mother let

him come to the Centennial. Then he said you was a jolly good woman, anyway.

He'd better believe.

Your son,

DICK HAR

P. S.—There was n't room for the rest of the name, but I thought you would remember.

Philadelphia, April 22, 1876.

DEAR MOTHER: Me and Willie went down to the Independence Hall. Aunt Martha says that is where they made the first Fourth of July.

There is a marble statute before the house that stands for George Washington. He is leaning onto a stump, and has holes cut in his eyes. There is a gold fence in the room, to keep folks from touching the things. There is a table with seven drawers, and a big old chair, and some other chairs, and they signed it on it.

There was a man behind the fence. I think he was a general. He had gold spectacles.

There was more'n a hundred pictures on the wall, and two flags. One was yellow, and they had that on the ships; and one was red and white, and that was on the land; and there was a snake on them, and he said, "Don't tread on me." Benjamin Franklin was in a gold frame on the wall. There is another man up over him, in his shirt-sleeves, because he is a minister; and another man with his trousers tucked into his stockings. They are very tight. There is a sofa that Washington had; but nobody cannot sit on it. It looks hard. May be it was softer then. We saw the big bell. It has a crack and some Bible on it. The man behind the fence had some wood bells to sell. They had a crack too, but the tongue was gold. I wanted to buy one for Tooty, but we did not have enough.

Your son,

D. HARDIN.

P. S.—We had only 33.

May 12, 1876.

DEAR MOTHER: It has opened. There is a yellow place to go in, and a little hole to drop the money in, and a thing that goes around.

There is a tall thing too that goes around when the folks want to go out. It has arms, and you are afraid it will catch you.

I went in. I heard the band, and that was the parade. Uncle Ben put me on a ladder, and I saw it. The sash was blue, and the men looked splendid with the red tassels on them.

President Grant came first, with a lady, and she bowed to the people; and then Mrs. Grant came, and then some generals, and then some men with hats made of fur, about as high as Tooty. There was a muddy place, and they talked and some folks sung, and they shot off some guns and bells that

opened it. Then they went to another place, and the President pulled something, and it hissed, and all the machinery began to go, and it made a great noise. So good-bye. Your son,

DICKERSON H.

May 25th, 1876.

DEAR MOTHER: Me and Willie go up to the Centennial every Saturday, all alone. Men never get lost, but little boys get lost. We never get lost. There is a long place, and that is the Main Building. It has flags on it. Every house has flags on it. There is a gold monument in the M. B. (you know what that



"HE GAVE ME A NECKTIE."

means), and it says it was dug in five years, and it is sixty-five tons, and you must not touch it. There is lots of policemen, and there is a red stripe in their trouser-legs, and they don't have to pay to go in.

I drew this picture of Willie and me last month, but did n't put it in the letter.

I saw a cane that had a little gold man on the top of it. There was some chickens' feet with gold on them, to pin a shawl with, and a real goat's head with a hole in the top to put snuff in. Uncle Ben says snuff is good for goat's heads.

There was a bear, and he was stuffed and stood up straight, and held a tray, and said he was a dumb waiter on the card; but I guess he could growl once.

There is a organ that plays by turning a handle. I think we might sell the piano and get one. You don't have to learn to play on it; you just turn the handle. It has little things that hop up on the under-side to make the music. The man plays a beautiful tune. I could play a beautiful tune if I had it. The man said so.

There is a little silver boy on horseback, and he pours a drop of water out of a silver cup all the time. Everybody holds their handkerchiefs under it, and then it smells sweet.

Your boy, D. H.

P. S.—How is the baby?

June 2, 1876.

DEAR MOTHER: There is a Remorial Hall, with a woman on the top, and some eagles. There is a soldier and two black horses in front, up on a block, with a woman on one side, and a wing on the other, and a big tail. She is big.

There are statutes inside. There are some people without any clothes on. There is Washing-

ton, but he is cut off, so he has n't got any legs; and there is a little boy that has pounded his fingers. There is a little horse, and a man came and said, "Where is the lady that belongs to that little horse?" But she had gone. There is a room full of old dirty heads and things that were dug up. The folks hold a telescope up to their eyes. It has two round places, and you look through. There are 'bout a million pictures, and you must not point a stick at them; it says so, or you'll get 'rested. There are some boots made of a alligator skin. A alligator is a snake. There is one in a glass box. There are some whales too. When they are little the mouth reaches almost to his tail, but when they grow big it is smaller. There are some folks that have shot a elk. They stand up and have guns, but they are not real folks. There is a fountain where four women hold a dish on their heads, and there is another fountain made out of snakes. The snakes hold their heads down, and the water comes out of their mouths, and squirts back. They are pretty, so good-bye.

Your son,

D. H.

P. S.—They are not alive.

Philadelphia, June 16, 1876.

DEAR MOTHER: I am glad you are coming. Bring Tooty and bring the money in my bank. There is a Japanese place, and there is some turtles in a glass box, and I am going to buy one. They cost 25 cents, and they stick out their heads and feet and tail. There are canes for 20 cents. They are very good for a young man. The Japanese folks have funny eyes, and don't talk very well. I know one. He asked me what was my name, and I asked him what was his, but I don't remember.

They have little things that stick their tongue out at folks. They are 15 cents. I asked him if he wanted another clerk, but he did not. There is a old woman churning and a man whipping a horse; but they are only toys. I think they might do for Tooty. There is a meter that fell down out of the sky. It is a black stone. There is a looking-glass

that makes you fat. My legs are as short as Tooty's, but big around, and I step about two miles it looks like. I'll put in a picture I made of it.

There is only a little more about it, and I guess Aunt Martha will write that. I got your letter.

Your son,

D. HARDIN.

P. S.—Please don't forget the money in my bank.



IT MAKES YOU FAT.

One day, a young man, sitting near these falls, saw a small bird fly apparently into the falling sheet of water. Presently it came back, was gone



GROUP OF BIRDS, NO. 1.

a short time, returned, bringing something in its beak, and a second time darted into the spray and disappeared. This young man was an enthusiastic lover of natural history, and he determined to find out what that bird was doing behind Boulder Falls. If you only could see the place, you would wonder he ever had courage to venture where he did. He had to build a sort of bridge, and he had to wade in between rocks, where the stream was swift enough to knock him senseless in a very few minutes if he lost his footing; he really risked his life to track that little bird to her home. And do you not think he was rewarded when he found, snugly stowed away in a hollow behind the sheet of falling water, the nest, with the young birds in it?

Poor little bird! One would have thought she had found the very safest sort of a place which the whole world could offer; and so she had—safe against storm, against wild animals, against sportsmen, against everything except a naturalist!

The nest is made of clay and green moss; its mouth looks like the mouth of an old-fashioned brick oven; and there are all the little birds, with their mouths wide open, just as they waited for

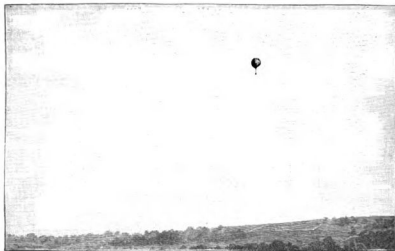
their mother to bring them food that day. The mother, too, he shot and brought away with the beautiful little house she had built. I think I could not have had the heart to kill her, even for the sake of the science of natural history. However, many things which seem cruel in themselves, must be done, or else we should never learn the truth about the wonderful creatures of which the world is full. But while I stood looking at the nest, I would have given a great deal to put it back under Boulder Falls again, with some happy little live birds in it, getting their dinner from their wet and dripping mamma. And the more I thought about it, the more I wondered whether it were really right for us ever to kill a living creature except for food. If there were a race of beings as much larger and stronger than we are, as we are than the birds, we would think it pretty hard, would we not, if they were in the habit of pulling our houses down over our heads, and killing us and our children, merely that they might classify us and label us and keep us in their museums?

If you visit the Centennial Exposition at Phila-



GROUP OF BIRDS, NO. 2.

delphia, you may see these stuffed animals and birds in the Kansas and Colorado building, where Mrs. Maxwell has arranged them for exhibition.



THREE MILES HIGH IN A BALLOON.

BY EDWARD DUFFY.

LET me tell the readers of ST. NICHOLAS what I may recall of a trip into the sky, last summer, on board the big New-York *World* air-ship.

There were four of us.

Alfred E. Moore, of Winsted, Conn., who built the balloon, had charge of it during our voyage; John G. Doughty, a photographer, also of Winsted, took views of the earth and the clouds. Prof. H. Allen Hazen, of the United States Signal Service Station at Washington, made records of moisture and temperature, and other phenomena of the upper regions, which have most value to those who study that special branch of science. I was one of the party simply as a reporter. The *World* balloon was the fruit of a plan whereby it was hoped to attain two objects. One was to enable the Government Signal Service to obtain certain facts about the upper currents of air which might be of value to the Weather Bureau. The other object was to excel the greatest balloon voyage ever made.

Prof. John Wise, a world-famed aéronaut, sailed through the air in July, 1859, from St. Louis, Mo., to Henderson, Jefferson County, N. Y.—a distance in a straight line of 835 miles. He laid claim to 1050 miles, by reason of the many turns taken during the trip, which took his balloon out of a direct course into circles and curves. This voyage is the longest recorded in balloon history.

The balloon was in the air over night—a period of about twenty hours. Prof. Wise tried more than once, but without success, to equal or exceed the famous trip mentioned. Finally, a few years ago, he left St. Louis in a balloon on a long trip, for the last time. He has never been heard from. A

reporter who went with him was found dead some weeks later on the shore of Lake Michigan. By reason of this and other disasters, the suggestion of a long air-voyage gives rise in the public mind to a keen sense of the perils which attend every attempt to stay in the sky over night.

It is only about one hundred and four years since balloons were first thought of, or first used to convey man into the upper air. But I can not here spare the space wherein to speak of any air-ship other than that which is the topic of this paper.

Now, let me, if I can, give you an idea of the shape and great size of the *World* balloon.

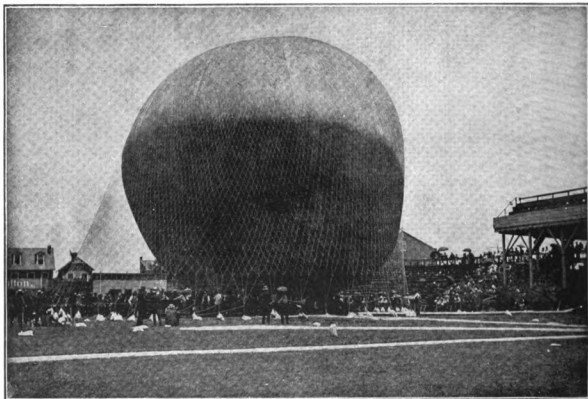
Fancy, if you please, a ripe Bartlett pear which exceeds the usual size millions of times; think of it floating in the air, stem down, with its top 124 feet high and its bulb 65 feet wide. Or, imagine a giant plum-pudding rising into the air higher than many a church-steeple, and occupying as great a space as does a large city store or a country hotel. Then you may have a fair notion of the size of our great air-ship. Mr. Moore, who built it, had made nearly a dozen air-trips, and was able, from a special study of the science of ballooning, to draw exact plans for the weight to be borne, which was, in all, more than two tons. In order to exceed Prof. Wise's record, our balloon would need to stay in the air longer than a day and a night, or nearly thirty hours. Prof. Wise, by chance, rose into a rapid current of air, which took his balloon feather-like along at the rate of a mile a minute. But the usual speed of balloons is less than thirty miles an hour, except when they happen to be caught in a strong gale.

As early as November, 1886, Mr. Moore began work upon his plans. Fine white muslin, a yard wide, and in a strip a mile and a quarter long, or about twenty-two hundred yards, was used to make the gas-bag. This cloth alone was half a ton or more in weight.

Over it, on both sides, were spread four coats of varnish of a special kind,—in all, about three full barrels. This varnish was used to fill up the pores of the cloth, through which the gas would otherwise escape into the air. The big net which covered the vast bulb was made from a fine quality of shoe-thread.

the gas-dome was fastened to a large hickory hoop which hung above the car, so near that the voyagers' hands might grasp it. To this hoop were fixed the cords which held the car.

Set into the top of the balloon was a valve, two and a half feet across the center. The cord from this hung down the inside of the bag, and through the open neck into the car, so that our captain might open the valve when he wished to descend. Another rope, called the rip-cord, was also at hand. This, with a strong pull, would tear the gas-bag from top to bottom almost in an instant, and would bring the balloon to the ground in a jiffy. But



INFLATING THE GAS-BAG OF THE BIG BALLOON. (SEE PAGE 138.)

Of this, four hundred pounds were used.

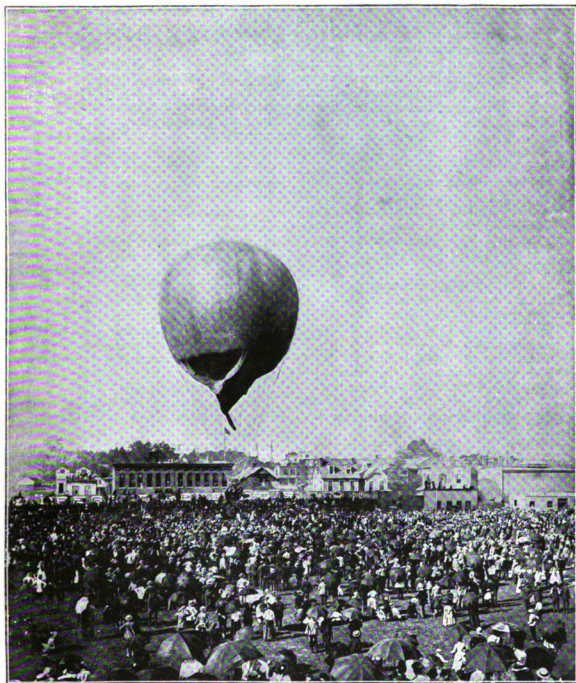
Next the car was made.

Most balloons have baskets of willow, wherein to carry voyagers and ballast. But ours was a strong, large car, made of matched pine and watertight. It was nine feet long, six feet wide, and a trifle more than four feet deep. On each side was a cushioned seat; and on the bottom of the car lay a rug. This car was hung from the balloon by thirty slender cords,—each about as thick as a lead pencil. To the eye these were far too slight to be safe; yet they were very strong, and in a test each cord had held up a greater weight than would ever again be fixed to it. The net which covered

this was only as a last resort, to be used when about to come down in water, or in a storm.

Now, let us consider the weight:

As I have said, the strength of the balloon was made equal to three tons. The gas-bag, and its ropes, and the car,—in short, the whole air-ship,—when ready, made up a ton in weight of itself. Its four passengers weighed about 600 pounds; there were 200 pounds of provisions, and fully three-quarters of a ton of paper and sand; also camera and plate cases, and other traps,—making a total weight of two and a quarter tons! Now, I hope you have a nearly correct idea of the size and power of the big *World* balloon, which, by the



THE START.

way, was next to the largest, if it was not actually the largest, air-ship ever made. After several delays, we made a start from Sportsman's Park, St. Louis, at 4:28 P. M., on the 17th of June, 1887. The date first set was the 11th of June, but it was thought best to wait for a strong air-current from the west which might waft us to the Atlantic coast or some part of New England or Canada. Prior

to the 17th, the wind had been from east to west, or from south to north. The latter course would have taken us to Lake Michigan or Lake Superior. This would have rendered the chance of the success of our trip very slight; and would have added thereto the extreme peril of our being blown about at night like a mere straw over one of those vast bodies of water.

You may wonder why St. Louis was chosen as the point from which to make a start. All of the great long-distance balloon trips attempted in this country have been begun at that place. And the reason is that St. Louis, besides having an ample gas supply, stands nearly in the center of our vast country. Going from that city, the aeronaut may be sure of plenty of land-room, let the wind bear him where it may. He may sail for hundreds of miles, at least, before he comes to any great sheet of water.

There is no need for me to describe to you all that took place before our flight from St. Louis. The big balloon lay in Armory Hall in that city for more than a week, half filled with air, which was forced in by a hand-pump. During these days it was, you may be sure, the chief object of interest to many mixed crowds of sight-seers. As the time drew near for the great trip, the public pulse ran high. A little before midnight of June 16, the balloon, which had been taken to the Park, was made ready for filling. The gas was let in; and for about sixteen hours the neck of the bag was kept on the supply-pipe.

At about 7 A. M. on the 17th, a stiff breeze sprang up, which some hours later was a source of serious trouble to those in charge of the balloon. At 1 P. M., the hour set for sailing, the huge yellow cloth dome was less than three-quarters full.

It inflated slowly.

In the strong wind, it now and then tore away, as if about to fly to cloud-land without its crew. It was a constant menace to the nervous ladies present; even men of stout heart did not repress a shudder as they thought of the perils of a trip among the clouds, at the mercy of so ugly and restive an ogre. Pitch and roll and twist and sway and tug; this it did all through the day. To the netting were fixed a hundred bags of sand,—some of them more than eighty pounds in weight. And added thereto were hundreds of stout men; yet the gusty wind caught our giant under the arms, as it were, and despite all the weight he bore, jerked him off his feet. The bags swung in the air like mere tassels; and the men were often brought upon tip-toe, as they grimly held on. At last the gas was shut off; the car was hitched on. The car had been made ready for its voyage, and was fairly full of the ballast and the various other things to be taken by the voyagers. I had on board big envelopes wherewith to drop dispatches from the sky; also twelve carrier-pigeons to bear messages to their homes during our flight above the clouds. I had also put on board my winter overcoat; but my comrades had donned instead some extra under-flannels to protect them from the chill air of the upper regions.

Now, behold us, ready for the start!

It is 4 P. M.

Crowds and crowds of people are present.

The seats of the large grand-stand fairly groan under their overweight of eager sight-seers—all in gay attire. Despite the stiff breeze, which is almost a gale, the sun beams with fervor, and the mercury stands at 96° in the shade.

Soon the giant ship rises,—up, up, a foot at a time; the sand-bags which held it to the earth drop away; one here, and one there; in their places hundreds of men stand and strain and tug at the monster bag which turns and twists above them. The west wind comes in fitful gusts around the grand-stand, and slyly strikes our ship with such vigor that for an instant it lays over almost to the grass-plot, like a boat's sail thrown upon the waves in a fierce squall. Then it rights again, and once more towers aloft and erect more than a hundred feet. Now Moore directs the work; he orders the voyagers aboard the car. The men who hold the guy-ropes walk in toward the balloon a foot at a time, and the circle grows smaller. Up, up stretches the huge dome; higher and higher it ascends, till at last all hands let go, and every cord is drawn taut.

But we do not stir.

There is more sand aboard than the balloon can lift. And so Doughty puts out one bag, then two, then three.

The car begins to quiver.

Out goes the fourth bag; a crowd of men hold the car, with all their strength, until they get the word from Moore. They hold the car to the turf, and drag us by dint of severe labor back into the center of the park. Here, just as Moore is about to give the word, a seventy-pound sand-bag slips over the edge of the car; its sharp hook catches the middle finger of Moore's right hand, and lays it open to the bone, and severs an artery.

It is an ugly wound.

But a doctor quickly binds a wet handkerchief about the cut finger, and once again Moore, our captain, bends his thoughts to the work at hand. The last bag is set upon the edge of the car. Over it goes.

"Now! Let go!"

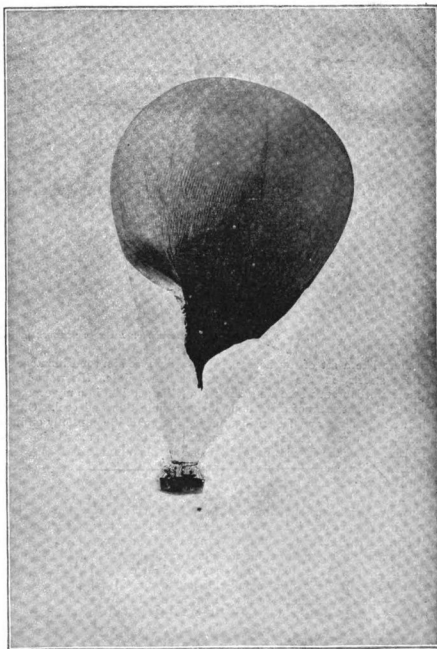
As Moore shouts this, the men release the car. Like a huge bird, our ship, at 4.28 P. M., rises from the ground,—so quickly, indeed, that amid the tumult about us, I do not clearly recall the exact moment.

As we clear the park fence our ship dips before the strong wind.

There is, for the instant, extreme peril.

Moore shouts, "Throw out sand! Quick!"

Hazen and Doughty, each dumps over what he



"WE SAIL AWAY TOWARD THE BLUE VAULT OVERHEAD."

may. Our ship at once rights itself; the car springs under the gas-bag, and the leafy tops of some trees brush its sides as we glide over them. We clear a brick house by a few feet only, then sail away toward the blue vault overhead.

The park begins to sink away beneath us. We have no sense of going up—no, not at all.

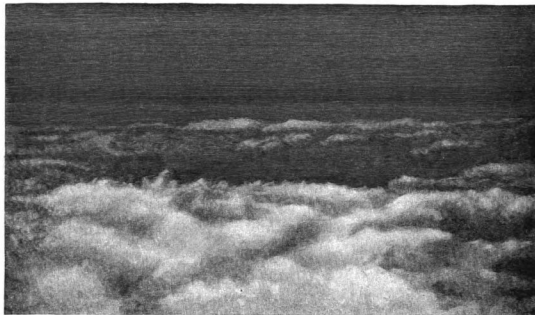
All things else go down, down.

The crowds as they cheer, and swing their hats, and wave handkerchiefs and parasols—it is they who fall away below us, and fast fade into a mass

of tiny specks of life and color, until ere long the whole city is but a spot upon the wide view of the earth.

This is my first flight.

Moore has been aloft nearly a dozen times, Doughty twice, and Hazen once. My head begins to pain me; my ears ring, and my thoughts grow as thick as in a trip through a boiler-shop or other noisy place. I stand and gaze over the edge of the car at the unique picture below, which slowly changes its forms and tints. The big smoky city



VIEW ABOVE THE CLOUDS, TAKEN FROM A BALLOON AT AN ALTITUDE OF A LITTLE MORE THAN A MILE.

of St. Louis lies there like a set of toy houses, with tiny strings for streets, in the shade of trees that seem mere weeds from where we gaze at them. On all sides is a flat mass of earth and tree. We are half a mile high, and fast rising. Slowly the car turns, and thereby tends to confuse our sense of place. Now the city lies on our left,—the great Mississippi on our right. A minute later, town and stream have shifted sides. Now Doughty, aided by me, runs over the edge of the car the long drag-rope, which hangs, hundreds of feet below us, not unlike a straw or thread from a robin's nest. We approach the great, broad, murky stream that flows from north to south through our country into the Gulf of Mexico. You know of it as "The Father of Waters." It is now in full view for many miles—its dark, sinuous surface dotted with busy tugs and steamers. We soon come to it; now we move across it; now we leave it to the rear.

A mile and a half high—and still going up. Hazen is busy with his records; and Doughty, with seventy-five photographic plates on board, holds his camera in hand, and turns it—first upon the earth, then upon the white clouds that, like a mass of snow, lie off to the east. With pad and pencil in hand I rapidly jot down what I may about our voyage, hoping to send my messages by the pigeons, which under a seat near by rustle uneasily in their cages.

I glance up.

Moore sits in his corner, a mere heap—his face a waxy white, his lips blue, his eyes half shut.

We hastily give him some brandy and water; this revives him a little. His wound has made him faint. We get him into my overcoat; for the air is now quite thin and cool. Our ship, with no captain to guide it, goes softly on its way—higher and higher, the earth seems bigger and bigger, as the circular line it makes with the sky grows larger and larger. With two and a quarter tons' weight, still our bird mounts rapidly upward,—now two miles, now two and a half. We sail far above the fields of yellow wheat and dark green corn of Illinois. Rivers are mere white threads; and lakes are patches of silver set into a carpet of many hues. The forest trees are bushes, that look as if a small scythe might easily mow them down. The thin air and our rapid upward flight make my head roar, as if with the sounds of noisy drums; I feel dizzy—like one about to faint away.

Now we are 15,000 feet high—nearly three miles.

Our ship has not yet come to the extreme top of her flight. We are far above the clouds. Over the edges of the thick white vapor we gaze at the earth, spread out below like a map, with green and gray, and brown and yellow spots thereon. From the discomforts of ninety-six degrees of heat in the shade when we left the earth, we have come to the chilly comfort of thirty-seven—a drop of nearly sixty degrees in less than an hour. This is a quick turn—one that never comes to man or beast below. Yet up here, where we are sailing softly, the air is so dry that the cold affects us much less than would the same temperature on the earth's surface.

Now we are 15,840 feet high.

At last we are more than three miles above the great ball of dried mud which rolls below, from west to east, for days, and years, and ages. Over head the huge pear-shaped bag stands erect; its neck and mouth wide open, through which the gas escapes into the car, where it assails our nostrils with its vile odor.

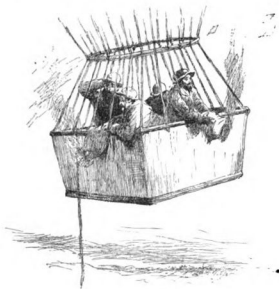
Very soon our ship touches nearly 16,000 feet, a point which is said to be above that ever made by any other balloon this side of Europe.

Then we come to a pause. An instant later the balloon begins to descend at the rate of fifteen feet per second, which is only one foot less than the distance a heavy stone falls the first second. A few seconds more, and our ship drops so fast that the car seems to fall away from us.

Moore, sick and faint though he is, springs to his feet.

"Over with ballast, boys! Quick!"

Doughty drops his camera and Hazen his instruments; each dumps over the sand as he grabs it — bag and all. But the sand shoots up instead of down; it hits the bag above, then settles like a



"THE SAND SHOOTS UP INSTEAD OF DOWN; THE PAPER 'DODGERS' FLY INTO THE SKY ABOVE US WITH A SPEED WHICH SHOWS HOW RAPID IS OUR FALL."

cloud into the car, so that it nearly stifles us. I throw out paper "dodgers" which fly into the sky above us with a speed which shows how rapid is our fall.

Down, down we go! We are in extreme peril.

We all but tumble through the air.

I gaze over the car. The earth seems to fly toward us — up, up it comes; the fields and woods

grow large, and hamlets and cities spring into sight on every hand. At last, after nearly a quarter of a ton of weight is thrown out, our rate of descent slows a little; a third of our drag-rope trails among the tall forest trees, and we are distant from the earth but 400 feet! And now our balloon comes at last to a pause, and we are safe! It goes up again lazily, a mile high; then descends to less than half a mile, and rises again above 6000 feet — falling always as the gas escapes, and rising as a part of the weight is thrown over the side of the car. Moore shouts to a farm-hand at work in a field with horse and plow, when we are half a mile up:

"How-far-are-we-from-St.-Louis?"

The reply faintly rises at last to where we are:

"Twenty-five miles!"

We now see that our trip must come to an end before dark. We have been but an hour upon the wing. Our gas has spent its strength, our sand has almost run out. We dare not, if we may, stay in the sky at night and run the risk of death among the giant forest trees. And so while the sun is yet more than an hour high, Moore casts out the anchor, or grapnel; with its four sharp prongs of bright steel, it truly has an ugly, hungry look. As we come to a wide stretch of open prairie land, our ship, left to itself, slyly sinks lower and lower, and nearer and nearer, to the bright green and yellow fields, over which we float as gently as a piece of thistle-down. About this time I let fly two pigeons with notes of tissue-paper tied to their legs, and also cast over a big envelope with a heavy buckshot inside to quicken its fall.

Before long we come so close to the earth that all objects thereon take on their true shape. We perceive farmers at labor in the fields of golden wheat; we catch the hoarse shouts of men, and the sharp treble voices of excited boys who watch us now with open mouth and eager eyes. We are yet half a mile from earth; but each mile we pass brings us lower down. Now we are down to two thousand feet; now down to less than the half of that. By and by, the end of the long cable, or drag-rope, touches the ground at intervals as we gently float along at fifteen miles an hour. Now it trails a few feet, then fifty, then a hundred. At last half of it, like a huge reptile, crawls over meadow, and fence, and field of corn and wheat. It leaves behind, to mark its swift course, a deep crease, two inches wide in soil and grain.

Now look out!

The sharp anchor catches hold for the first time. With its greedy prongs it grips the turf, lets go, bounds twenty feet in the air, and lands again; it once more tries its teeth in the fresh ground. Again the dirt flies, and the anchor bounds ahead

and takes another bite. Moore shouts: "Steady, boys; here 's a stout fence and a stone wall."

The anchor comes to it and takes hold greedily. For an instant only does it hold; it jerks our car upon its end, so that water-keg, pigeons, food-cans, and passengers tumble together in one corner. But then away come twenty feet of the rail-fence, and the stones scatter; and we sail on as before.

Horrors!

A house lies straight in our path! As we come to the little story and a half cottage, our anchor bounds around a corner, grazes the pump in the front yard, then springs at the fancy fence, and comes away with its teeth full of palings. An old man and woman who stand in the front door stare at us, with terror in their eyes. They see how close they were just now to death and ruin, had their cozy home been pulled about their ears.

again. At last a German farmer's wife, as we sail past her house, gives the long drag-rope a quick turn about the trunk of a stout apple-tree in her dooryard. This fetches us up with a vicious jerk, and nearly spills us out of the car. Here, tied fast to the tree, we are still two hours in coming to the ground, although aided by a crowd of strong active men.

Moore pulls the valve-cord.

As the gas escapes, the sides of the bag come together, and form a big kite, which catches the stiff breeze; then we sail aloft nearly over the tree. Down settles the car to within fifty feet of the corn-field under us; then the wind sends us aloft again. Doughty seizes the rip-cord to split the bag at the top, so that it may the faster lose its power to ascend. With surprise he finds that our balloon is already torn, and rips at the merest



"A DOZEN FARM-HANDS CHASE US FOR THE LAST MILE."

Our anchor keeps to its work, and though it lets go, as it snatches this thing and that, it yet lessens the speed of our air-ship. For more than ten miles we go on in this way. We are now but a few hundred feet high, and our speed has lessened to eight miles, or less, an hour. A dozen farm-hands chase us for the last mile. They seize the anchor rope, are lifted off their feet, but eagerly take hold

touch! This is a clew to the strange and sudden loss of gas while on our way.

It is about 9:20 P. M. when we again set foot upon the ground outside our car.

We find the place to be Hoffman, Illinois, fifty-five miles east of St. Louis.

Next day the balloon is sent back to that city by rail, and we plan to start again within a week.



BROUGHT TO A STOP, AT LAST.

But the severe injury to Moore's finger, and the many repairs and changes which it is thought best to make in the balloon, lead us to delay our second trip until later in the season.

Expecting a long trip, we had taken food and water for three days. We had chicken, corned beef, beans, bread, crackers, hard-tack, salmon, lobsters, pickles, salt, vinegar, mixed nuts, oranges, and bananas. So you see that we were not likely to starve, had we gone, as we thought we might, into the deep wilds of Michigan or Canada. We also had hooks and lines for fish, and a keen ax, to aid us in the woods, or wherewith to chop our way out of the wreck had we been cast away on one of the great lakes. And we had an electric light for use at night. Our plans had been well laid; and had not Moore been hurt, or had not the balloon been torn at the start, our voyage would perhaps have been more to our liking.

A few final details may interest you.

The last and first sound to reach us, while we were above a mile high, was the sharp shriek of a locomotive. I saw one express train as we soared above its tiny track; and it looked like a mere toy train a few inches long, which did not seem to move faster than a snail. Yet we knew

that it was on its way with all its usual speed—thirty miles an hour at least.

During our voyage we ate and drank just as we might have done at a picnic.

Truly, we lived "high." A luncheon above the clouds was to me a very novel affair. I threw over the peel of an orange. Down, straight down, it shot, a flash of gold in the sun, a hundred feet—a thousand feet—a mile. Long before it struck the earth, it had gone out of sight. But, before it disappeared, it came to a point where it seemed to stand still in mid-air.

I dropped a big *World* envelope.

It went down at first upon its edge; then it began to turn, and now and again the sun's rays caught it full upon its broad side. It became at last as small as a postage-stamp, or the nail of your thumb.

I wish I had the space to tell you more.

From my mind's eye our *World* balloon trip will never fade. I may truly say that I then saw more of the earth than I am likely to see until I go aloft again. Within a few hours, more novel sounds and scenes met my senses with surprise and delight than in years of prosy life upon the ground.

over all, tightly clutched in four little hands, was the bed-spread, drawn up to hide from mamma's prying eyes anything curious below. Mamma understood at a glance.

"Let 'em go," said papa, in answer to a "what shall I do?" "They wont go far, and they'll find out for themselves how much fun there is in it."

So two uncomfortably dressed children tossed and tumbled all night.

"I've wondered all day what Trip was up to," said mamma.

"She's been making preparations, I guess. We shall find her provisions hidden away somewhere."

A little search brought to light, under the bed, the family valise and market basket. In the valise were a pillow, a blanket, a knife, two forks, one plate, a teacup, a coffee-pot that had suffered the loss of a nose, a syrup pitcher, a spoon, Trip's work-box, "Mother Goose's Melodies," an old jacket, two dolls, two aprons, and a neck-ribbon. In the basket were some cold corn-bread, a tiny bag of flour, some salt, a huge paper of saleratus, a parcel of sugar, two beets, a turnip, a dozen raw potatoes, and a slice of uncooked ham.

On the floor lay Tom's agricultural implements and weapons of war,—his spring-gun, his glittering sword of tin, a tiny hoe, a hatchet with a split clothes-pin for a handle, and a four-bladed jack-knife (that is, one that had long ago been four-bladed, but, as far back as Tom's memory went, one very rusty, very jagged, and very short blade was all it could boast).

The early dawn found Trip and Tom astir.

"It's dark," said Tom.

"Oh, come on!" said Trip.

"It's all smoky," said Tom, looking dubiously out into the dull gray of the early morning.

"Oh, Tom Nelson! If I would n't be ashamed to back out! Come! You take the basket, and I'll carry the bag," said Trip.

Clatter, clatter, bump, bump, and Trip and Tom, basket and bag, were down-stairs, through the hall, out of doors.

Mamma cautiously peeped from her window and saw two wretched little figures, in the mist of an uncomfortable, drizzling morning, starting out toward the great elm in the back-yard.

Trip staggered along under the weight of her valise, dragging an umbrella behind her; while Tom brought up the rear, his gun slung over his

shoulder, his sword dangling from a clothes-line belt, his hoe and hatchet carried *à la* tomahawk, and his precious knife in the deepest recess of his deepest pocket.

Mamma Nelson dressed herself and two-year-old Katie, who had not been taken into the conspiracy on account of her inexperience and extreme youth, and went down-stairs to be ready for developments.

"Rap, rap!" at the door.

"Mum," said a small voice, making desperate attempts to speak *large*, "can you lend me a few kindlings this morning?"

"Certainly, sir, certainly," said mamma, briskly.

"Very happy to accommodate you. You are moving, I see!"

"Shipwrecked," said Tom in a deep bass, glance-



ON THE DESERT ISLAND.

ing at the griddle-cake preparations for breakfast, as if famine were added to the ordinary horrors of shipwreck.

"An unpleasant morning for your furniture to be exposed," said sympathetic mamma.

"Goin' to build a house," said Tom, disappearing with his kindlings.

"Rap, rap!"

"I would like to retain a few matches, if you please, ma'am," said the smooth voice of Trip, whose curious mixing of the Queen's English was